



**Remembering  
The Children**  
National Day for  
Truth and Reconciliation

## Fact Sheet

In 2021, the Government of Canada passed legislation to make September 30 a federal statutory holiday called the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (NDTR). This day provides an opportunity for reconciliation, ensuring that the tragic history and ongoing legacy of residential schools is never forgotten. It is a day for meaningful dialogue, quiet reflection and participation in Indigenous community events.

### APTN'S PARTICIPATION IN NDTR

#### Programming

Each year, APTN offers special programming on September 30 in honour of residential school Survivors, their families and their communities. In addition, a specially-curated collection titled “National Day for Truth and Reconciliation” is made available on [APTN lumi](#), and features a broad range of APTN programs that reflect on the experiences of residential school Survivors and encourage audiences to continue walking together on the path towards reconciliation.

#### Live Gathering

In 2022, APTN and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) came together to produce a one-hour commemorative gathering called *Remembering the Children: National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*, which was broadcast live from LeBreton Flats Park in Ottawa. The commemoration included a mixture of personal remembrances, artistic reflections and calls to unlearn and relearn the truth about residential, day and boarding schools.

NCTR and APTN will unite once again on Sept. 30, 2023, at 1 p.m. ET to co-host *Remembering the Children* in honour of the third annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The 90-minute multilingual commemoration will be broadcast live across the country from Parliament Hill, on the unceded, unsundered territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation. This year's gathering will encompass sacred ceremonies, powerful reflections from esteemed Elders and Survivors and moving performances by First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists.





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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### **NDTR: A Call to Action**

The idea of a federally recognized holiday dedicated to reconciliation was originally proposed in 2015 by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) as part of their 94 Calls to Action. In Call to Action #80, the TRC called upon the federal government, in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, to establish a statutory holiday “to honour Survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.” NDTR is a day to reaffirm to Survivors and all those who have been affected by the residential school system, that they matter and they will never be forgotten.

### **Significance and Evolution of September 30**

NDTR takes place annually on September 30. This date was chosen because it is the time of year when children were taken from their homes and forced to go to residential schools. The timing also presents an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the upcoming school year. It encourages Indigenous Peoples, local governments, schools and communities to come together and create a more equitable world for future generations.

Since 2013, September 30 has been observed as Orange Shirt Day, a movement to recognize the colonial legacy of residential schools and commit to the ongoing process of reconciliation. Orange Shirt Day recalls the experience of residential school Survivor Phyllis Webstad, who at age six was stripped of her brand-new orange shirt on her first day attending the St. Joseph Mission Residential School near Williams Lake, B.C.

### **Residential Schools**

Residential schools were government-sponsored Christian schools that were established to assimilate Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian culture. Although the first residential facilities were established in the early 1600s, the term usually refers to schools established after 1880, as this is when they began to receive funding from the federal government. Residential schools permanently disrupted lives and communities, creating intergenerational traumas that continue to impact Indigenous Peoples today. The last residential school closed in 1996.

### **About the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation**

The NCTR is a place of learning and dialogue where the truths of the residential school experience will be honoured and kept safe for future generations. The NCTR was created as part of the mandate of the TRC. The TRC was charged to listen to Survivors, their families, communities and others affected by the residential school system and educate Canadians about their experiences. The resulting collection of statements, documents and other materials now forms the sacred heart of the NCTR.





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## OBSERVING NDTR

There are many ways to participate in this day of remembrance and reconciliation. Allies are encouraged to wear an orange shirt in solidarity with Indigenous communities on September 30, but that alone is not enough. Here are some other meaningful actions you can take on NDTR and going forward:

- Tune in to Indigenous programming. APTN offers an incredible lineup of programs on September 30, which always aims to educate and inspire. After NDTR, this programming is made available on [APTN lumi](#) for a limited time.
- Watch sessions from [Truth and Reconciliation Week](#) from the NCTR, featuring Survivors, children of Survivors, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, artists and leaders from many nations and cultures.
- Learn about the history of the residential school system and its ongoing consequences via the informative articles on the topic written by the APTN News team, available [here](#).
- Read books by Indigenous writers. Here are just some of our favourites among many: *Seven Fallen Feathers* by Tanya Talaga, *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline, *Jonny Appleseed* by Joshua Whitehead, *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Heart Berries* by Terese Marie Mailhot, *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground* by Alicia Elliott, *There There* by Tommy Orange, and *The Strangers* by Katherena Vermette.
- Attend a public lecture on Indigenous history.
- Make an “Every Child Matters” sign to display at home.
- Participate in a memorial walk or attend an event hosted by Indigenous community members.
- Donate to the [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#) and the [Indian Residential School Survivors Society](#).
- Review the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action](#) and commit to at least one.

As you observe this day, remember to take a moment to honour the Survivors and communities who have so courageously shared their stories. Observe a minute of silence, put out a small pair of shoes or light a candle for the children who never made it home. What matters is that you do it with intention.

